

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
March 26, 2008; 4:30 p.m.
Council Chambers**

PRESENT

Trena Carter
Ian Kohen
Gil Palmer
Rosalind Pegram
John Roberts
John Stroh

ABSENT

Akua B. Agyei
Greg Lewis
Tony McClendon
Jason Staley
Jay Myers

***** Meeting Called to Order *****

OTHERS PRESENT:

Pamela Vincent and Shiva Rallapalli: newly appointed Commissioner and Commissioner Volunteer respectively.

STAFF PRESENT:

Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith and Secretary, Lula Young.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Commissioner Roberts called roll then requested any corrections or amendments to the February 2008 minutes.

Commissioner Carter moved to accept the February 27, 2008 minutes. Commissioner Stroh seconded. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley provided the report for the donations account. With one expense, the purchase of ticket stock, the donations account balance was \$5,784.21. Director Tinsley explained the difference in the donations account and the office operating budget for the new Commission appointees.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Commissioner Palmer requested that Commissioners and Staff introduce themselves to the Commissioner and Volunteer. Director Tinsley announced that new and reappointed Commissioners and Commission volunteer were sworn in on March 25th in preparation of their April start date of their three year terms. She went on to provide a short history of the commissioner selection process and that the Human Rights Commission is the only board within the city that utilizes the open application process for Commissioner appointment. She acknowledged City Council's use of this process for approximately 19 years and this process

opens the volunteer opportunity encouraging involvement by diverse segments of the community.

Commissioner Palmer continued by reporting that he had attended a conversation on diversity at the Center for Teaching and Learning facilitated by Dr. Kevin Jones. He advised that the conversation was part of a program being formulated by I.U.P.U.C.'s Diversity Cabinet in an attempt keep conversations about diversity active in the community. He went on to share that as part of the diversity recruitment effort at I.U.P.U.C., Dr. Jones had also interviewed for a position with I.U.P.U.C. that same day.

Commissioner Palmer shared that Dr. Jones facilitated the discussion on not losing the 'History' under the title of Black History as Black history has historically been the history of omission in American history. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Palmer provided an update on a meeting with school officials based on their concern about communications received from community members opposing the formation of a student G/SA club at North High School. Discussion ensued, culminating in a request for available commissioners to attend the next school board meeting on March 31st, when the public would have the opportunity to voice their opinions comment about the Student G/SA club. Discussion ensued.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley provided Commissioners an update of the significant amount of casework being managed by staff and finalization of annual dinner plans. She went on to inform Commissioners of a Diversity training she would provide at I.U.P.U.C. for faculty professional development and training for BCSC administrators regarding social networking laws to aid them in developing a social networking and use of technology policy to regulate how students use their cell phones on campus.

Director Tinsley reported that a new complaint involving national origin in public accommodation was filed and that it is tentatively scheduled to be mediated. Once the mediation is scheduled, the dates will be made available as a training opportunity for Commissioners. She went on to advise that for the first time in the history of the Commission, more public accommodation complaints were filed than employment complaints. She advised that 89% of cases filed 12 years ago were employment now; staff receives more housing and public accommodation

cases. In sharing the breakdown, public accommodation cases consistently involve national origin as the basis with 100% of the complainants being Hispanic

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners that annual dinner ticket sales were over 200. She expressed deep appreciation to the ad hoc committee and their hard work.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Update on new Indiana Statutes

Director Tinsley announced that due to the new Indiana statute, the Property Tax Reform statute – is having an effect on government budgets. She informed Commissioners that at the Mayor’s request, she must draft a proposal reflecting a five percent cut in the current budget. She went on to advise that the mayor has suggested that she start charging for the training she provides. Discussion Ensued.

LIAISON UPDATES – GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCE:

Commissioner Kohen reported that he spoke to 60-70 students at Central Middle School. He stated that when asked if they thought they were a minority, only one African-American student in a group consisting of Asians, Latino and Jewish students, raised their hand. Commissioner Kohen provided the students with information on the different acts of discrimination that they may have experienced.

Commissioner Kohen shared his experiences during a trip to New Orleans, LA in March, reporting that conditions were still in a deplorable state.

LIAISON UPDATE – INTERFAITH FORUM:

Director Tinsley reminded Commissioners that the ‘Illuminating Peace’ fabric sculpture has been installed and is ready for Commissioner viewing.

LIAISON UPDATE – IMMIGRATION ISSUES GROUP:

Commissioner Pegram announced that Su Casa is seeking a new Executive Director as the current director, Reyna Navarro is relocating.

OPEN FORUM:

Commissioner Roberts reported that he had been able to make his presentation to students of Mr. Chuck Grimes at Southside elementary. He advised that he shared information about the

Underground Railroad routes that camp through Indiana with the students. Commissioner Roberts announced that on April 5th, he will be speaking at the East Central Adjunct Conference at Ivy Tech speaking on Diversity in Teaching.

Commissioner Palmer announced the second annual Cincinnati Bengal's Celebrity Basketball Game & Fundraiser sponsored by the Herana-daze Jones Foundation will occur in early May 2008.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Roberts seconded. Meeting adjourned.